



# Recycling FAQs

Get the answers to your most frequently asked recycling questions.

## Why should I recycle?

**Recycle today for a better tomorrow!** Recycling is one of the best ways you can contribute to a sustainable future. Throwing away an item that can be recycled is a waste. **Recycling has both local and global benefits.** Locally, it saves our limited disposal capacity by reducing how much garbage we have to bury in our landfill. Globally, recycling reduces pollution and conserves both energy and natural resources.

## Can recycling help the economy?

Yes. **Recycling can create jobs**, cut business costs (for disposal), and reduce our dependence on foreign resources. For example, manufacturing aluminum beverage cans from recycled cans reduces the need to import bauxite ore and uses 95% less energy!

## How can I start recycling?

**Use this directory!** See pages 5-13 to learn how to [recycle items such as cans, bottles, and paper](#).

## Can I recycle more than cans, bottles, and paper?

Yes. **For additional recycling opportunities:** see page 18 for our [online guide listing over 250 items](#), page 19 for [hazardous chemicals and electronics](#), page 20 for [used motor oil](#), and page 21 for [business programs](#).

## Why isn't there just one recycling program?

**Each city selects its own recycling program**, which means there are 25 different programs in Pinellas County. If you live in an incorporated municipality, look for it on [pages 5-12](#) (alphabetical listing)

to find out what items you can recycle. If you live in an unincorporated area, see [page 13](#).

## How much do we recycle?

During the last ten years, Pinellas County has maintained a **recycling rate in the range of 25-34%** of the total garbage generated in Pinellas County.

## What is Florida's recycling goal?

Currently, it's 30%, but in the 2008 Energy Bill (House Bill 7135), the Florida Legislature proposed a [new statewide goal to recycle 75% by 2020](#). We will need to work hard to achieve this goal. You can start by looking at how much of

your garbage could be recycled (see the pie chart below). We encourage you to recycle not only at home, but also at work, school, and other areas of your busy life. **Your efforts can truly make a difference!**

## What does the recycle logo mean?

The three "chasing arrows" in the recycle logo symbolize the **three stages of recycling:**



- **Collect** - Recyclables such as cans or bottles are collected.
- **Process** - Materials are processed (recycled) into new products.
- **Buy** - Consumers buy the recycled products.

Recycling is a continuous cycle that recovers usable materials from consumers and returns them to the manufacturing stage, where they replace raw natural resources. By recycling, you reduce the need to cut trees and extract minerals from the earth to make the things we use every day.

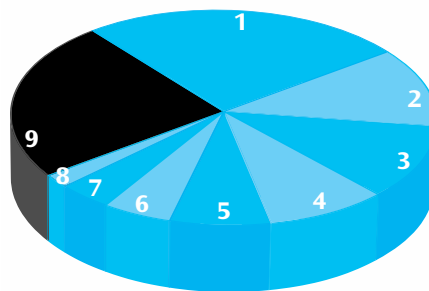
## What does "close the loop" mean?

**When you buy a recycled product, you "close the loop"** by completing the recycling process. You can help even more by choosing products made with post-consumer recycled materials. This means the manufacturer used materials that were recycled by someone like you!

## What recycled products are available?

There are **many recycled products available**. Paper products

### 76% of your trash could be recycled!



- 1 - **Paper** (26%)
- 2 - **Food** (12%)
- 3 - **Bottles & cans** (11%)
- 4 - **Construction debris** (9%)
- 5 - **Yard waste** (7%)
- 6 - **Electronics & chemicals** (5%)
- 7 - **Clothing & fabric** (4%)
- 8 - **Metals** (2%)
- 9 - Items not easily recycled such as dirty diapers or tissues (24%)

The pie chart is based on 2007 waste composition data for solid waste disposed of at Pinellas County Solid Waste Operations.

with recycled content—such as facial tissue, paper towels, copy paper, and food packaging—are readily available locally. Also look for recycled carpet, mulch, or decking. Read package labels, or ask a store manager for help. **The same way you scan a label for calories, you can check for recycled content.** Look for the recycle logo and words such as “35% post-consumer content”.



Scan labels for recycled content.

### What does post-consumer content mean?

- **Post-consumer content** means a product has been used by a consumer (for example, yesterday’s newspaper) and collected to be recycled. Look for post-consumer recycled materials whenever possible.
- **Pre-consumer content** consists of factory trimmings (such as paper scraps at a paper mill) which are routinely recycled.

### What’s the difference between curbside and drop-off recycling programs?

- In a **curbside recycling program**, recyclable materials (such as newspapers) are placed in a special container at the curb for pickup by a recycling truck.
- A **drop-off recycling program** provides a center where citizens can drop off recyclable items.

### Are there recycling options for apartments, condos, or businesses?

Yes. Visit our A to Z Guide at [pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle) and select [On-site Recycling Options](#) from Quick Find Lists. Also, see page 21 for information on [business waste reduction and recycling](#).

### Where can I learn about the benefits of recycling?

Visit the Environmental Protection Agency’s website: [epa.gov/region4/recycle](http://epa.gov/region4/recycle) to learn more about environmental, economic, and community benefits of recycling.

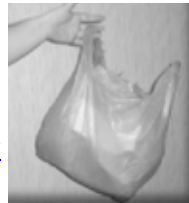
### What plastic items can be recycled in Pinellas County?

Most municipal recycling programs in Pinellas County accept **plastic bottles**. This includes empty bottles used for soda, milk, water, cleaners, shampoo, ketchup, and many more.

### Can I recycle plastic items other than bottles?

Yes. See our A to Z Guide at

[pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle) for **ways to recycle other plastic items** such as [grocery bags](#), [egg cartons](#), [newspaper sleeves](#), [produce trays](#), [Styrofoam packing peanuts](#), and [plant pots](#).



Drop off plastic bags at the local grocery store for recycling.

### Can I recycle glass?

Yes. **There are recycling options for glass** including 12 cities that accept glass in their curbside recycling programs (see pages 5-13), plus 26 drop-off sites available (see the [bottom of the map on page 3](#)).

### Can I recycle milk cartons?

Yes—if you live in [Belleair Beach](#), [Belleair Bluffs](#), [Pinellas Park](#), [Seminole](#), [Tarpon Springs](#), or [Treasure Island](#). See pages 5-13 for details on the cities’ programs.

### Can I recycle fluorescent light bulbs?

Yes. There are **convenient local options to recycle fluorescent bulbs**. Visit our A to Z Guide at [pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle) for more information. Never throw unwanted fluorescent bulbs in the garbage since they may contain mercury.

### Can I recycle cooking oil?

Yes. There are **drop-off sites available for liquid cooking oil**,

such as the used oil from a turkey fryer (see [pages 5-13](#)). Please do not pour oil or grease down the drain because these products can clog pipes and lead to sewer backups.



Used cooking oil is recycled into biodiesel fuel for trucks.

### Can I recycle medicines?

No. There are no local programs. However, there are collection events for proper disposal of medicines. For information, visit our A to Z Guide at [pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle). **Never flush your unwanted medicines** because wastewater treatment is not designed to remove many medicines.

### Can I recycle household items by donating them to charity?

Yes. There are **over 100 local organizations that need donations** of clothing, furniture, linens, and other reusable items. Visit our A to Z Guide at [pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle) and select [Charity Donations](#) from the Quick Find Lists at left.

## Other Resources

### What if I have additional questions about recycling?

Visit [pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle) to find **answers to other frequently asked recycling questions** and the most up-to-date information about our recycling programs, or use the contact information below.



Visit our website for [answers to 60 FAQs about recycling](#).